

ALASKA: Land of Riches

Purchase Price, \$7,200,000
Production, \$840,000,000



GOVERNMENT ALASKAN RAILWAY

The summer—no sweeter was ever:
The sunny woods all athrill;
The grayling leap in the river,
The bighorn asleep on the hill.
The strong life that never knows harness,
The wilds where the caribou call,
The freshness, the freedom, the farness—
O God! how I'm stuck on it all.
—The Spell of the Yukon (Service).

THE house of representatives the other day passed an amendment to the government Alaskan railroad act by which the additional sum of \$17,000,000 was appropriated for the completion of the road by December 31, 1922. The debate was presumably more or less tinged with partisan politics. Leaving out the politics many interesting facts of value were brought out concerning Alaska—Land of the Midnight Sun—which has proved a veritable treasure trove to the United States and is only at the beginning of its development. Some of these facts are here given, with credit to the various representatives.

Mr. Curry of California.—Mr. Chairman, in 1867 when Alaska was purchased through the efforts of Secretary of State Seward from Russia for \$7,200,000, which was less than 2 cents an acre, the European nations poked fun at the United States, and the papers of the United States ridiculed Secretary Seward and referred to Alaska as "Seward's Iceberg."

The climate of the most of Alaska is better than that of Scandinavia and New Foundland. Vegetables and cereals can be and are raised there, and it is the richest undeveloped mineral section on the face of the earth.

Time has justified Seward's purchase of Alaska for the United States. Since 1869 Alaska has produced over \$840,000,000 worth of wealth; \$300,000,000 of that from her fisheries, most of the rest from her mines and from her furs. In the same time Alaska has bought from the United States \$400,000,000 worth of property. It has done that under existing law that practically ties up the resources of Alaska and prohibits them from being developed.

In 1914 under these conditions, knowing that Alaska should be developed and that a railroad could not and would not be built by private enterprise, the congress of the United States enacted a law authorizing the president to construct a railroad or railroads in Alaska, not to exceed 1,000 miles in length, and authorized the expenditure by him of \$35,000,000 for that purpose. The president placed the construction of the road under the control of the secretary of the interior, and he in turn organized what is known as the Alaskan engineering commission to take practical charge of the work.

The original authorization of \$35,000,000 would have constructed this road under ordinary conditions and circumstances, but the war came along, wages increased 59 per cent, the cost of material increased up to 161 per cent and transportation up to 147 per cent. Under those circumstances the \$35,000,000 is not sufficient to complete the work. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary, unless we wish to sacrifice the \$35,000,000 already invested, that this \$17,000,000 authorization be allowed.

The road, when completed, will be 601 miles in length. The main line, from Seward to Fairbanks, will be 471 miles in length. The spurs and branches and side lines will make up the 601 miles. All of the road has been completed, with the exception of some work to be done to complete the first 71 miles from Seward north and a gap of 100 miles and another small gap of 25 miles. Most of the 100-mile gap has been surveyed and some of the roadbed has been made.

The road started from Seward on the southern point of Alaska, and went to Anchorage. Part of that road—71 miles—had been constructed. From Anchorage over to the northern terminal of the road, Fairbanks is located on the Tanana river. The Tanana river is a branch of the Yukon river, and the Yukon river and the Tanana river are navigable for 2,000 miles. The Alaskan railroad commission commenced building from the southern point north. They brought the material to Seward and Anchorage, and they commenced to build from the northern terminal south, so that they could save time and save money.

The road already reaches to the coal fields. There the 1,202 square miles of coal fields in Alaska that have been explored and experted by the coast and geodetic survey, the geological survey and by the Alaskan engineering commission. That is all on the line of this road. It is estimated that there are 30,000,000,000 tons of coal that will be opened to commerce by this road, and 15,000,000,000 tons of it will be high-grade coal which could be used for coking and smelting ore, and such purposes, and the rest of it for fuel and matters of that kind. In Alaska it has been estimated that there are 150,000,000,000 tons of coal. No person knows how much there is.

Mr. Strong of Kansas.—There has been discovered in Alaska not only gold, but silver, copper, coal, lead, iron, antimony, tungsten and platinum in large quantities. In addition, there has been discovered large fields of oil. It has splendid agricultural advantages. It is estimated that it has over 100,000 square miles of tillable land. It has a growing season of 100 days, and because of the



PLACER MINING ON A STREAM



Mt. McKinley National Park



ALASKAN GOLD MINE



great length of the days, that growing season is worth about 200 of our days. So that they are enabled to grow crops suitable to take care of a large population and take care of the stock that they may produce. The crops are wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, and they have produced an alfalfa which makes a good crop. Its vast forests of timber suitable for paper pulp, are awaiting a ready market, while its fisheries are the greatest on this continent.

Mr. Miller of Washington.—I have been over nearly all of Alaska. I have gone into the hills with my pack on my back. I have teamed with few provisions I had 200 or 300 miles with a dog team out to my diggings. The greatest copper mines on the face of the earth are within the territory of Alaska. You know how we searched the world for metals during the war. We have 99 per cent of them in Alaska. They are there awaiting the hand that will develop them.

Something has been said here of the reindeer situation. There is no prettier sight in the world than to see a thousand head of reindeer grazing on a mountain side. The Aleutian Islands are full of them. There are 150,000 or 160,000 reindeer in Alaska. They are a godsend to the natives. They go out with their little herds. An Indian or an Eskimo may not have over 25 or 30 reindeer, but he herds them as a careful husbandman takes care of his little flock of sheep. Incidentally they are cleaning out the wolves and lynxes and the other predatory animals that infest the country. The reindeer support the natives. And I truly believe that with the great grazing lands that there are in Alaska, the future development of the reindeer as a substantial source of meat supply for our country is one of the most promising that we have before us.

Now, the climate there is not bad. Over in the interior, in the Yukon valley, the atmosphere is dry, and with the temperature 25 degrees below zero you can wear an ordinary hat all day long and your ears will not get cold. When you go out to the coast you get the moisture. Going away from the coast into the Yukon valley you go over a mountain chain some 4,000 feet high, and when you get over that chain you are in the great arctic slope. I have come out of that valley with the thermometer 42 degrees below zero, where I could stay out doors all day without discomfort, and have dropped over that mountain chain only 30 miles and come out to the coast where the thermometer was 8 degrees below zero and have nearly perished with the cold. The interior is a cold, dry climate. Animals can forage all winter in the interior country.

It would surprise some of you to know that in that country the ground is eternally frozen. No one has ever dug through the frost, and they have been down a thousand feet.

The fields of barley and rye and wheat are grown on the top of ground that is frozen for a thousand feet beneath. It thaws on the surface in the summer time. It gets very warm. There is daylight 16, 18 and 24 hours in the day, and crops mature quickly. They come right up overnight. Of course, in the winter the nights are long and dark and cold, but the summer seasons are delightful. The thermometer goes up to 80, 90 and 95 in summer, but in the winter it becomes exceedingly cold. The coldest weather I ever saw in the Yukon valley was 68 degrees below zero. That is cold weather, and it is dangerous weather; but as you go down the Yukon river, and perhaps 500 miles from the mouth, there is a Catholic mission, the Holy Cross mission. There is one of the most beautiful apple orchards I have ever seen, perhaps 50 acres of the most beautiful young apple trees just coming into bearing. And grazing over broad acres of clover was one of the finest herds of Jersey cattle I have ever seen. All that in a land that is frozen. It is a queer country. Every rule of the geologists is reversed when you get to Alaska.

And I tell you, gentlemen, just as sure as God, the future will unfold for Alaska and the Ameri-

can people the wealthiest possession held by any nation in the world. Mineral, agriculture, fisheries, stock raising—everything for future development. It is the golden land of promise for the coming generation. All they want is your help. Come and help them. Let us have 250,000 people in Alaska.

None of the speakers mentioned Mount McKinley. It will be noted that the small map suggesting the general course of the Alaskan railroad shows Mount McKinley. This great peak, with a surrounding area of 2,200 square miles, is now Mount McKinley National park. The government railroad runs close to one corner of the peak and will make it accessible.

Mount McKinley National park lies approximately in the center of Alaska, in the midst of the vast wilderness to the south of the Yukon and to the west of the Tanana. Here the Alaskan range, which forms a line of snow-capped summits 200 miles long, culminates in several gigantic peaks, the highest of which—Mount McKinley—towering 20,300 feet, is the highest mountain in the world above the line of perpetual snow, and one of the most impressive mountains of the earth. Seen from an altitude of 1,800 feet, Mount McKinley is stupendous; travelers say that there is nothing like it, even among the higher Andes or Himalayas.

The park area is in scenic keeping with forests, glaciers, lakes, streams and lofty peaks. So from a scenic viewpoint the new McKinley National park takes place in the front rank of our 17 national parks.

Mount McKinley is a natural big game refuge. It is the fountain-head of the big game supply south of the Yukon and west of the Tanana. It is the center of a region where big game abounds. Here can still be seen the wild game living in security, protected by the remoteness and ruggedness of the region. Great moose stalk through the valleys about timber line. Herds of caribou feed on the moss-covered hills. Bands of bighorns browse on the high mountain slopes. The grizzly, monarch of the American wilderness, gives the crowning touch to this picture of a wild game paradise.

But already is this big game paradise menaced. The prospector, miner and market hunter are closing in. The white man's civilization is drawing near. Already sledloads of wild game reach the Fairbanks market. With the completion of the government railroad New York will be but three weeks away. Our national expansion has always carried with it evils as well as good. Fires have swept away forests; dynamite and filth have killed off the fish; a leaden hail has exterminated the wild life. "Remember the buffalo!"

When this day comes the big game of the region will naturally gravitate to Mount McKinley. And there it will find sanctuary in the national park. So, aside from its scenic magnificence, the creation of Mount McKinley National park is well worth while as a game preserve.

On the other hand, so remote is this vast wilderness that the act contains a concession to the prospector and the miner in the matter of killing game for food. The act establishes the park as a game refuge and provides a heavy punishment for the killing of game. There is, however, this proviso:

"Provided, That prospectors and miners engaged in prospecting or mining in said park may take and kill there so much game or birds as may be needed for their actual necessities when short of food; but in no case shall animals or birds be killed in said park for sale or removal therefrom or wantonly."

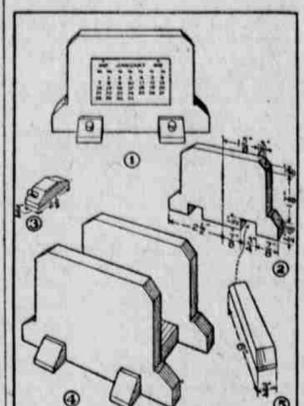
It is obvious that inasmuch as the passing of the park act does not modify or affect the mineral land laws now applicable to the area and hence does not exclude prospectors and miners, it would not do to prohibit the killing of game for food by them in case of necessity.

Useful Christmas Gifts That Any Boy Can Make

By A. NEELY HALL

It requires no more time to make a useful gift than one which will be of no practical value, so why not decide, before beginning this season's gifts, what will be appropriate for those whom you wish to remember?

Calendar-Board and Pen-Rack.
Of the smaller gifts, nothing would be better appreciated than this article for one's desk. Fig. 2 shows a pattern for the board. If you haven't hardwood, go to a carpenter. He will



let you pick a scrap from his waste pile, or will sell you a piece for a few cents. Wood three-eighths-inch thick is just right. Both sides must be cut alike, and the surest way to get them so is to draw a center-line, first, then lay off the measurements each side of this. The notches in the bottom edge receive the base blocks (Fig. 3). Bore a small hole in the beveled portion of one end of each base block, glue a peg in it to form the front of the pen-rack, and fasten the blocks in the notches cut for them.

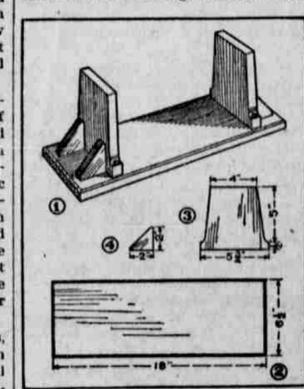
Sandpaper all surfaces, then apply some wood stain and wax. A small calendar-pad tacked to the center of the board, and felt glued to the underside of the base blocks, will complete the gift.

Postcard Rack.

The same pattern that was used for the calendar-board (Fig. 2) is required for the ends of the postcard-rack in Fig. 4, and Fig. 5 shows a pattern for the base strips, which fasten in the notches in the bottom of the end pieces. Finish the wood with stain and wax.

Book-Rack.

The book-rack in the illustration is made of wood five-eighths inch thick.

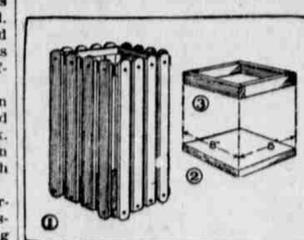


First, prepare the base board by the pattern of Fig. 2, then the pair of ends by the pattern of Fig. 3, then two pairs of brackets like the one in Fig. 4. These seven pieces are all that the rack requires. Be careful to get the sides of the end pieces symmetrical. Bevel the edges of the base-board.

Use round-headed blue screws for assembling the parts, and place these in the positions indicated in Fig. 1. A coat of stain, then one of wax, and a button of felt glued to the underside of the base at each corner, will complete the bookrack.

Waste-Basket.

An 8 by 8 inch board, for a base (Fig. 2), four strips out of which to make a frame of the same size as the



baseboard (Fig. 3), eight laths to cut in half for side strips, a few finishing nails, and 82 round-head blue screws, are all that you need for the pretty waste-basket shown in Fig. 1. Plane the laths smooth, trim off their ends and bore holes a trifle larger than the screws, near the ends. Screw the side strips to the base edges, four to a side, then prepare the top frame of the form shown in Fig. 3, and screw the upper ends of the strips to it.

Wood stain and wax, or two coats of paint or white enamel may be applied, to finish the woodwork.

GAMES FOR CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS TIME.

It may be for a Christmas party, or for the family gathering, that you will need ideas; for either, the following games will furnish fun for young and old alike.

The Game of Tip.

This old English game requires the use of enough assorted Christmas candies, nuts, raisins, and other dainties, to make a small pile upon a table; also a pair of sugar tongs. One of the party is chosen, who must retire to another room while the remaining players decide upon one of the dainties in the pile to be known as "Tip." The chosen person is then recalled, and with the tongs removes pieces from the pile, trying to avoid the piece named Tip, of which, however, he does not know the location. All pieces removed belong to him, unless he removes Tip, when all must be returned to the pile, and the turn passes to the next player, who retires to the other room while another Tip is named. A player may pass his turn when, after drawing several pieces, he wants to



avoid the possibility of losing them through drawing Tip. The game continues until the pile disappears.

A Fill-in Game.

For a laughter producer this game has no peer. A poem is selected and copied upon paper, with each noun omitted and a line drawn in its place. Then the nouns are copied upon small cards, one upon each. The cards are dealt, an equal number to each player, and a player is chosen as reader. The reader reads the poem, pausing at each space, and the players fill in, in turn, a noun from the cards in their pile. The nouns will seldom come in their original places, and the result will be a ridiculous mix-up.

Sliced Toy Puzzles.

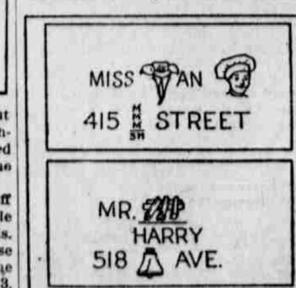
From advertisements cut pictures of toys, and paste these upon pieces of cardboard; then with a sharp knife slice the cardboard into irregular pieces as indicated in Fig. 1. Place the parts of each picture in an envelope by itself. When ready to play the game, give each player an envelope, and direct him to put together the parts so as to make the picture of the



toy. At the expiration of a given length of time, direct an exchange of the toys.

Acrostic Place Cards.

An original idea for the place cards for the Christmas party is to prepare them in the form of letters from Santa Claus, with the names and addresses of the guests worked out in acrostics, as is suggested on the two specimen envelopes in the illustration; and have the guests find their places by interpreting the inscriptions upon the envelopes. The first envelope illustrated reads, "Miss Lillian Cook, 415 Adams Street," the second one, "Mr. Harry Underwood, 518 Bell Avenue." Some of the addresses may be harder to make



into acrostics; others will be easier. Making them will be fun; deciphering them will afford several minutes of keen enjoyment.